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OO RUEHGI RUEHMA RUEHROV
DE RUEHKH #0394/01 0721614
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 131614Z MAR 07
FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6452
INFO RUCNFUR/DARFUR COLLECTIVE
RHMFISS/CJTJF HOA

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 000394

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SENSITIVE, SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF A/S FRAZER, AF/SPG, AND S/CRS
NSC FOR PITTMAN AND SHORTLEY
ADDIS ABABA ALSO FOR USAU

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: DPA SIGNATORIES CLAIM HELP NEEDED NOW

11. (SBU) SUMMARY: Ongoing frustration at the lack of Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) implementation boiled over in El Fasher as signatory factions forcibly entered the USG-funded Peace Secretariat to demand that their concerns be addressed. The factions claim that their soldiers are "starving" and in dire need of humanitarian assistance. Having committed to the DPA and no longer relying on raiding Sudanese Government forces to re-supply, the factions intimated that their only option may be returning to the bush. The USG should support the formation of the Logistics Coordination Committee (LCC) of the DPA to provide a mechanism for international assistance to the signatories. END SUMMARY.

12. (SBU) Leaders of the political arms of the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM)/Minawi, the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM)/Peace Wing, and the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA)/Free Will met with S/CRS Poloffs on March 6 to convey their mounting frustration with the lack of DPA implementation, the dire need for humanitarian assistance for their fighters in the field and their apologies for brusquely barging into the Peace Secretariat the previous day, with some movement members carrying weapons. The faction leaders, all of whom participate in the joint Sudanese Government-DPA Signatories Security Arrangements Committee, complained that without sufficient resources - including office space, vehicles, access to computers and basic supplies - they cannot promote the DPA to their constituencies nor carry out their respective obligations.

13. (SBU) The factions observed that the Sudanese government succeeded in carrying out its strategy of co-opting rebel groups, only to leave them "high and dry." Additionally, with little or no support forthcoming from AMIS, the factions have become increasingly desperate for sustenance and resentful toward AMIS. S/CRS Poloffs concurred that no one, including the international community, was pleased with the pace of DPA implementation and that the underlying problems that led to conflict in Darfur would only be exacerbated without the goodwill of the parties to fulfill their commitments.

14. (SBU) The SLM/Minawi representative explained that another factor in the groups' dissatisfaction related to recent attempts by the Sudanese government to distribute humanitarian assistance to the signatories. Through consultations at the Security Arrangements Committee, the Sudanese government agreed to provide varying quantities of sorghum, sugar, cooking oil, lentils, and salt to the factions. According to the signatory representatives, they showed up to receive their supplies in El Fasher only to discover that media was present to document the event. The movements refused to accept the humanitarian assistance, rationalizing that the Sudanese government would use the media to create propaganda that would tarnish the image of the rebel factions. Furthermore, the movement leaders explained that the quantities offered by the Government were inadequate and that there was no AU or UN presence at the event to provide transparency and act as an impartial observer. Meeting

these conditions - no press, greater quantities and an AU or UN witness - would be necessary for the movements to accept Government humanitarian aid. In the absence of assistance from the government, AMIS or the international community, the leaders implied, the movements might have little choice than to return to the bush and re-supply themselves through force. (Note: The movements claimed that their respective counterparts in both South and West Darfur received supplies in late February from the Sudanese government without press or problems. End Note.)

15. (SBU) S/CRS Poloffs protested the signatory factions' uninvited and armed intrusion into the USG-funded Peace Secretariat on March 7, where the movements congregated following their aborted attempt to receive Sudanese government supplies in El Fasher. Frustrated with AMIS' apparent lack of interest in witnessing and facilitating the Government logistics delivery, the factions went in search of a place to gather and to vent their frustrations. After a verbal confrontation with AMIS staff at the Peace Secretariat, the rebels proceeded to the Force Commander's office to air their grievances. The movement leaders apologized S/CRS Poloffs for their rash behavior at the Peace Secretariat and affirmed their understanding that no weapons would be brought onto the premises. (Note: The fact that the movement leadership was not aware of the Peace Secretariat - despite a representative from each non-signatory

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faction being assigned there - underscores the groups' lack of internal organization and coordination, which is illustrated in other examples ranging from control over local commanders to arranging humanitarian access. End note.)

16. (SBU) Comment: The signatory movements' increasing frustration with the Sudanese government and AMIS regarding the delay in DPA implementation has the potential to drive many of them out of the peace process. Besides further complicating the political and security landscape, additional defectors would make implementation of even the most superficial DPA-related activities less likely and

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less credible. It is difficult to assess the factions' claim that their "forces are starving in the field." However, without taking supplies from the Government by force--their previous logistics mechanism--they must now look to new sources.

17. (SBU) Comment continued: Desperate for resources, many of the rebels are freelancing in banditry or other illicit activities (like vehicle theft or hijacking food convoys). The DPA provision for non-military logistical support was raised by AU DPA Implementation Team head Sam Ibok at the February 7 Joint Commission meeting and has been discussed in the context of the Ceasefire Commission. In a February 10 diplomatic note to the AU, Senior Assistant to the President Minawi requested that AMIS establish the Logistics Coordination Committee (LCC) called for in Article 28 of the DPA. This body is intended to act as a joint mechanism involving the AU, the UN, the movements, and international donors to assess the logistical needs of the signatory factions, procure the items, and distribute them. Within the framework of USG legal restrictions on provision of food aid to combatants, the LCC could be an expeditious instrument to allow the U.S. to provide in-kind assistance to the rebel signatories while also maintaining some influence on how the supplies are disseminated. End comment.

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